

The Sunday School Service.

BY DAVID BAILEY.

Sept. 7th 1884.

Confidence in God.—Psalm 27: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear.—Ps. 27: 1.
[Open the Bible and read the lesson.]

INTRODUCTION.

This Psalm is attributed to David, but at what time it was written has not been satisfactorily determined. It would seem, however, that he had just passed through some great trouble. Some writers think that it might have been written after the death of Absalom, but it is scarcely the language we would expect at that time. It would come in very appropriately, however, after some of Saul's persecutions.

LESSON.

Verse 1. The Lord is my light. A strong expression. David could "walk in the light of God" and his feet would not slip. By this light his soul would be comforted; there would be no bewilderment, as there is when a man is out in a natural darkness, and he can never be sure of his way. **And my salvation.** Salvation is through the Lord. His light enables the faithful to see the dangers that surround them and by shunning them to gain a haven of safety.

Whom shall I fear? Safety and light from God gives us great peace and we fear nothing but God's displeasure. **The strength of my life.** Sometimes interpreted "My living stronghold;" equivalent to "The Lord is my fortress."

Verse 2. When the wicked. The wicked are the enemies of the good always. David's calling his enemies wicked was prophetic. **To eat up my flesh.** A strong expression designed to show the exceeding bitterness of their hatred. **They stumbled and fell.** The Lord confounded them and they could not accomplish their designs.

Verse 3. Though a host. "The Lord and one are a majority;" numbers amount to nothing against the Lord. **My heart shall not fear.** Not trusting in his own strength but putting confidence in God.

Verse 4. One thing have I desired. Not one thing only but one thing above all others. **What will I seek after.** Showing that he had an earnest desire, a working faith. If Christians truly desire a higher life they will "seek after it," work for it. **That I may dwell in the house of the Lord.** That is, that he may have free access to the Lord. It is probable that the Psalmist had lately been deprived of sanctuary privileges and that it had made an enduring impression on his mind. **To inquire.** David often consulted God through the high-priest in order to discover what the will of the Lord was.

Verse 5. In time of trouble he shall hide me. It was customary to fly to the altar in times of great danger, as was the case with Joab at his death. **1 Kings 2: 29. In the secret of his tabernacle.** The most holy place. David would not have been allowed to enter there but he was here speaking figuratively of his faith, that the Lord would shield him. **He shall set me upon a rock.** Where his enemies could not overcome him.

Verse 6. Now shall mine head be lifted up. His confidence will cause him to lift his head and cease from his despondency. **Sacrifices.** Thankoffering. **I will sing.** While these sacrifices were being offered he would sing unto the Lord for joy.

Verse 7. Hear, O Lord! The psalm here changes from a song of thankfulness to a prayer. It would seem that as the Psalmist spoke of lifting up his face, he realized how much he needed God's help. **Answer me.** David knew that the Lord would answer if he asked in the proper spirit.

Verse 8. Seek ye my face. The same command is given now, and Christians should be as ready to respond as was this singer of the olden time.

Verse 9. Hide not thy face. Turn not away nor refuse to answer. Kings looked upon petitioners when they received them kindly. **Ester 5: 2. Put not thy servant away.** As being unworthy to receive an answer. **Thou hast been my help.** David had cause to thank the Lord for his help all through his eventful life. **O God of my salvation.** See note to verse 1.

Verse 10. When my father and mother forsake me. He does not intend to say that such a thing will happen, but this is put for the most dire of earthly troubles. **The Lord.** "There is one that sticketh closer than a brother," father or mother.

Verse 11. Teach * * lead. The Psalmist asks for instruction and asks that the way may be made so plain that he need not stumble in the presence of his enemies.

Verse 12. False witnesses are risen against me. If any one has enemies who are watching him, he must expect to have his actions misconstrued and his words perverted and turned against him.

Verse 13. Unless I had believed. His faith and hope sustained him. He seems here to refer to some particularly sore trial. **To see the goodness of the Lord.** That God would still stand his friend. **In the land of the living.** Before he was taken away by death.

Verse 14. Wait on the Lord. Here the Psalmist resorts to exhortation for the purpose of causing others to profit by his experience. **Be of good courage.** Do not faint and give way to despondency but trust in the Lord. **Wait, I say.** David makes this very emphatic, he wishes all to understand that he is very much in earnest in the matter.

The Cause at Edna Mills and Vicinity.

About eight months ago brother Swihart was called to hold a series of meetings at Edna Mills, some time after he was also solicited to stop at Transitville. The meeting at this point, five in number, resulted in two accessions from the German Baptist church. This gave the Brethren courage, and they called the brother back again. Accordingly brother Swihart came, and began a series of meetings at what is called the "Devil's corner;" continued the meeting a little over a week, resulting in seven additions by baptism. When the meetings began at this place it was said; it is of no use to preach here, the people are too hard. But the interest grew better and better, from the beginning to the end. A number said they were convinced of the doctrine and would unite with the church if there was an organization at the place, or if they could have regular preaching. Thus, you see brethren, that the harvest is truly great and the laborers few. Let us all pray the master of the harvest to send more laborers in his vineyard. Meetings commenced at Edna Mills Saturday evening, Aug. 16th. At this point brother Swihart wielded the sword of the spirit with such power that the adversary of souls relaxed his hold and the true light of the Gospel shone with such brilliancy that men and women were heard to say, "What shall we do to be saved?" They were answered by the word of God, and gladly accepted the requirements. On Sabbath, August 24th, in the presence of about eight hundred spectators, they were buried with Christ in baptism to rise and walk in newness of life. The final result of this meeting God only knows. The result up to this time is five by baptism, one candidate restored. I will say that those who have come out are among the better class of people. That is not all; it is heard said on every side, "That is the doctrine for me. The Bible and that alone; go away with your isms and creeds."

The Brethren at Edna Mills are encouraged; they feel that the clouds of tradition are breaking and the sunshine of God's glory is fast ripening a bountiful harvest for the Master. May the Lord bless brother Swihart for his labors of love. Brother Gordon and myself left for home on the evening of the 24th, brother Swihart to continue the meeting.

Brethren, let us pray for the cause of Christ everywhere. May the time speedily come when the pure gospel of Christ may take the place of church creeds; and to this end may all of Christ's ministers present to the world the pure and unadulterated word of God. More anon.

S. H. SEAWRIGHT.

Darwin City, Ind.

Uniformity in Non Conformity.

We clip the following from an exchange concerning the Zoarites whose community is located in Tuscarawas county Ohio. They are a peculiar people and dress in uniform, and are ruled over by leaders. Their peculiarities even extend to their beer and wine drinking. Perhaps it is their peculiar way of letting their light shine.

"The settlement is now composed of 300 souls, ruled over by leaders selected by them. They have everything in common, no individual possessions being allowed. On the 7,300 acres belonging to them the crops this year amounted to 300 acres of wheat, 200 acres of oats, 60 acres of barley, 30 acres of rye and 200 acres of corn, besides hay, etc. The above, after being harvested, will be divided among the members of the settlement. Their stock number 570 sheep, 300 cattle, 60 horses, 100 hogs. The milk cows are all driven into one inclosure and milked, and the milk is divided among the people of the little village Zoar, which is the home of all the sect. They have a place of worship and a good hotel and store. Also a brewery which manufactures 60 barrels of beer a month, giving to each Zoarite 6½ gallons of beer per month, or an average of over two glasses per day for each one of the community. Besides the above they also manufacture wine. The village boasts of a good brass band composed of Zoarites. Their houses and barns are models of neatness and convenience, yet most of their work is done by hired help. The place affords interest to excursion parties and is visited by many."

From West Independence.

About six miles southwest of Fostoria, in Hancock county, Ohio, is West Independence, a little village, containing among other buildings two churches. One occupied and used by the United Brethren, and the other by the Brethren and Evangelicals jointly. Brother Isaac Kilhefner has been, and is, regularly ministering to the Brethren every four weeks. By his request we visited the place on Aug. 23rd, and preached four discourses to the best of our ability. Had good and very attentive congregations. We felt well pleased with the appearance of the little flock of members, numbering about thirty; all zealous in the good work. This is in the bounds of what used to be called the Rome church, under the oversight of Elder John P. Ebersole. The Brethren and German Baptists have drawn the line more distinctly here than at many other places. This is owing to the fact that Elder Ebersole is a consistent, matter-of fact annual meeting man, and practices what he believes, in matters of church discipline. The result of course is favorable to the Brethren's cause, and it is as it should be at all points. The fact is all the members in the Dunkard fraternity should know exactly where they belong, and if all the German Baptist elders would do their duty like brother Ebersole there would not be so many hanging on the fence but all would get down to business.

If our Brethren at West Independence had a settled pastor among them they might do still better, but even as it is they are getting along very well. All is love and union, and they are highly esteemed by other professors, and even the German Baptists seem to accord to them due consideration. We felt that the prospect for the future is good. We enjoyed our visit among them very highly.

P. J. BROWN.

Congress, O., August 25.

Undergoing Affliction.

Sister Alice Taylor, who has been sick for some time with the dropsy, was anointed in the name of the Lord, Thursday, 21st instant. Sister Taylor bears her affliction with christian fortitude and resignation. The prayers of the church in her behalf are that she may recover, if the Lord will, and again unite with us in the service of the sanctuary, where her presence and influence are so much needed. Paul had a desire to depart and be with Christ, nevertheless, to abide in the flesh was more needful; so our sister, seeing the needs of the church, has a desire to remain and work for Jesus. But this she knows, through the grace of God a blessing on earth and a crown in heaven await her.

S. KIEHL.

Dayton, Ohio.

Brother Swihart Heard From.

DEAR EVANGELIST: I have been working in the Master's cause at Transitville and Edna Mills, of evenings and Sundays just two weeks. The Lord is blessing our efforts. Seven have been baptized, one restored, and four have confessed the Lord and are to be immersed next Sunday. Others are counting the cost; some are very near the kingdom. More anon.

J. H. SWIHART.

THE BIBLE AS A CIVILIZER.

When a Pagan ambassador asked Queen Victoria the reason of the pre-eminence of her realm over that of his monarch she gave him a Bible, saying, "This is the secret of Britain's greatness." Our International Exposition would be criminally incomplete, did it not include the Holy Bible, in its many languages and forms. In those vast buildings there is nothing so great, nothing so pure, nothing so creative, nothing so preservative, nothing so inspiring, nothing so enduring, as this Book of books. Those multitudes of material things are "of the earth, earthy"—this is from heaven; those are the productions of human genius and skill—this is from God. Those things are made—this is revealed, inspired, supernatural, miraculous. Those things are the pride of nations—this is their salvation. There "the ends of the earth" come together, bringing from the gorgeous East "the wealth of Ormus or of Ind," "barbaric pearl and gold," and treasures from almost every land and clime. Here, "more precious than fine gold," are the laws of God, the visions of prophecy, the sweet gospel of Jesus Christ, the revelations of "the new heavens and the new earth," and all printed in type fitly named of "agate" and "pearl," and "ruby," and "diamond." Merely as specimens of skill in the art of book-making, and as illustrations of the learning and the linguistic advances of our times, in contrast with the old black-letter tomes and the illuminated manuscripts of ancient days, those Bibles, standing in the centre of the department assigned to the literature of the world, declare their relation to all of the best

achievements of the human mind. But, surrounded as they are by the almost endless varieties of the material products of modern civilization, they remind us that our greatness lies not merely in the arts and sciences and industries of the age, not in the outward forms of our civic advancement, not even in the national powers and progress which are so splendidly illustrated by the government of the United States in its great building which shows to the world that

"Peace hath her victories
Not less renowned than war;"

but in the providence and goodness of Him whose "gentleness hath made him great." Apart from this, all else in that wonder land is but the vain show of our mortal state, "the fashion of the world that passeth away." But for that Book the greatest of the world's Exposition would have been impossible. It could not take place in Mexico, nor in Asia, nor in any other country that has not a high Christian civilization and an open Bible, and that freedom which gives full scope to the "wisdom" which "dwells with prudence, and findeth out knowledge of witty inventions." Prov. 8: 12. Better still, here is the inspiration of

"That Shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning, how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos;"

And above all the noises of that complicated machinery, and the discords of those human tongues, we hear the rippling music of

"Silos's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God."

—Rev. W. J. R. Taylor's Historical Discourse
"The Bible in Our Last Hundred Years."

Putting on the Brakes.

Every enterprise has its engineer, and for each conductor there are usually a score of brakemen. They are by no means necessary in all cases; but present nevertheless in force, and from constitutional proclivities are ever active in producing a pause.—Genius may develop, and philanthropy may project plans for the public good, but they often meet with a cold and formal reception, with bitter and relentless opposition. In every age and country they have had to undergo the gaze of idle curiosity, or the more trying ordeal of unjust criticism. Progress in every department of society often moves slowly on account of the vast number of brakemen—self-constituted employees—who are ever ready on down-grade and up-grade to check the speed—they are ever on the lookout for "something to turn up"—ever foreboding evil—and at every turn and change of prospect ready to apply the brakes. The pause, the sudden checking of all forward movement, is the consummation of the highest earthly ambition; with philosophic winks and nods they communicate their hopes and fears, and should their exertions be sufficient to stop temporarily the chariot-wheels of progress, they are the first to exclaim, "Always thought so!" "Told you the thing would fail!"

Almost every community has some formula of its own by which its public benevolent business is generally transacted. Much benefit to many, with trouble only to a few, has been derived from the following general one, to wit: U square plus 1 is equal to U Z.

The first number of this equation represents the workers in every public enterprise; the second number embraces all the brakemen from A to Z; who say, "You two and one other are enough to attend to these public works, such as repairing dilapidated churches, conducting Sunday Schools, &c.; as for us, we never had any turn that way." "Besides, it doesn't suit us to attend church regularly, and as for the Sunday Schools, they are a good place for children, but not for grown people, Oh, how lonesome!" There are many brakemen whose power consists in indifference. Through want of sympathy and co-operation many an enterprise, fraught with promise of good, drags out its weary life. Many a light that now dimly shines on public altars,—the common heritage of a common people,—but for cold neglect and penurious support would become beacon fires to brighten the hearths and hearts of many homes.

The age demands earnest, hearty workers. Skilled engineers and faithful conductors should be universally welcomed. Workers and not brakemen should board the trains of intellectual and moral enterprises. No passengers without "through tickets" should gain admittance; no traveler "in disguise," no loafers, should hang around its coaches, for it carries no sleeping palaces. All unnecessary freight only retards motion; and all who are not active, vigilant, faithful workers are only brakemen, such it does not need, since it is under the eye of One who never sleeps or slumbers.

Humanity Hall, Va.

The virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude.